

ESL Phases and Levels – Early Childhood (Years 1–3)

Phase	ESL Levels	National Benchmarks	Age/Year Level	Years at school	Mainstream Year/Age Level
Phase 1	BL1		3-6/Preschool-Year 1	Children can move from BL1 to Level 1 within one year with ESL for ILSS support - concentrating on oral language skills in Year 1 .	
	BL2		3-6/Preschool-Year 1		
	BL3		3-6/Preschool-Year 1		
	Level 1 L/S		6/Year 1	It may take up to 1.5 years for ESL students to move to the next Level - 3 years to move 2 levels.	
	Level 1 R/W		6.5/Trans-Year 2		
	Level 2 L/S		6-7.5/Year 1-2		
Phase 2a	Level 2 R/W	#3 Writing/Reading	8/Year 1-3		Year 3 - 8yo
Phase 2b	Level 3 L/S		7.5-9/Year 2-4	Reading is mastered before Writing. Writing skills are built upon the foundation of Reading.	
Phase 3	Level 3 R/W	#3 Reading	9.5/Year 3-5		Year 3 - 8yo
Phase 2b	Level 4 L/S		9-10.5/Year 4-6		
Phase 3	Level 4 R/W		11/Year 5-6		

Levels of achievement

Listening

Receptive Language (Listening) is usually higher than Expressive Language (Speaking). Students will understand more than they are able to express to you. A large percentage of communication is non-verbal: body language, gestures, facial expression, tone of voice, inflections. This non-verbal communication, as well as familiarity with routines allows students to gain an understanding of what is required of them.

ESL Phases and Levels – Primary (Years 4-7)

Phase	ESL Levels	National Benchmarks	Age/Year Level	Years at school	Mainstream Year/Age Level
Phase 1	BL1		9-12 Year 4-7	Children can move from BL1 to Level 1 within one year with ESL support - building on oral language with scaffolding and modelling.	
	BL2		9-12 Year 4-7		
	BL3		9-12 Year 4-7		
	Level 1 L/S		9-12 Year 4-7		
	Level 1 R/W		9-12 Year 4-7	Students often plateau at level 2 and Level 4. They need explicit teaching to get beyond these plateaux.	
	Level 2 L/S		9-12 Year 4-7		
	Level 2 R/W	#3 Writing/Reading	9-12 Year 4-7		Year 3 -8yo
	Level 3 L/S		9-12 Year 4-7		
Phase 2a	Level 3 R/W	#3 Reading #5 Writing	9-12 Year 4-7	Reading is mastered before Writing. Writing skills are built upon the foundation of Reading.	Year 3/5 - 8/10yo
	Level 4 L/S		10-12 Year 5-7		
Phase 2b	Level 4 R/W	#5 Writing/Reading	10-12 Year 5-7		Year 5 -10yo
	Level 5 L/S		10-12 Year 5-7		
Phase 3	Level 5 R/W	#5 Reading #7 W/R	10-12 Year 5-7	Students can move beyond Phase 2 after 5-7 years of school with ESL support.	Year 5/7- 10/12yo
	Level 6 L/S		12 Year 7		
	Level 6 R/W	#7 Reading/Writing	12 Year 7		Year 7 - 12yo

In 2002 there were 56 students in Katherine Group Schools who reached the National Benchmarks in Maths and Reading: Band 1 Maths - 26, Band 1 Reading - 8, Band 2 Maths - 7, Band 2 Reading - 15. Writing results are not available at this time.

Conversion Chart –First Steps / *NTCF English Outcomes* / *NTCF ESL Outcomes*

Approximate Year Level for National Benchmarks	Prior to Year 3 Transition, Year 1, Year 2	Year 3 National Benchmarks 8 years old	Year 5 National Benchmarks 10 years old	Year 7 National Benchmarks 12 years old	Beyond Year 7 High School		
NTCF ESL Outcomes Reading	BL2 - Level 1	Level 1-2	Level 2-3	Level 4-5	Level 5-6	Level 6	Level 7 and Beyond
NTCF English Outcomes Reading & Viewing	<i>Key Growth Point 2</i>	<i>Key Growth Point 3</i>	<i>Band 1</i>	<i>Band 2</i>	<i>Band 3</i>	<i>Band 4</i>	<i>Band 5 & Beyond</i>
First Steps Reading DC	Role Play	Experimental	Early	Transitional	Independent	Advanced	
NTCF ESL Outcomes Writing	BL2	BL3-Level 1	Level 2	Level 3-4	Level 5-6	Level 7 and Beyond	
NTCF ENGLISH Outcomes Writing	<i>Key Growth Point 2</i>	<i>Key Growth Point 3</i>	<i>Band 1</i>	<i>Band 2</i>	<i>Band 3</i>	<i>Band 4</i>	<i>Band 5 & Beyond</i>
First Steps Writing DC	Role Play	Experimental	Early	Conventional	Proficient		Advanced
First Steps Spelling DC	Preliminary	Semiphonetic	Phonetic	Transitional	Independent		

Please provide feedback to KGS colleagues and advisory staff as you work with these levels.
Does it work for you? Do the levels cross over accurately for your students?

DECODING THE PHASES

Refer to NTCF p 100-102

PHASE 1 learners are unable to cope with the demands of a mainstream classroom.		
Range FROM.....TO	Teaching focus to develop
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May use L1 or have silent period• Cannot negotiate meaning in L2• Use single L2 words/body language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Begins to contribute comments in L2Begins to read/write in L2Familiar with school culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• confidence• use of initial L2 skills in the cultures of school & community; (takes precedence over (mainstream) content learning)• skills in learning-how-to-learn (managing classroom environment/early literacy)
PHASE 2a learners can communicate socially in L2, and respond to some classroom activities. have difficulty using L2 for learning.		
Range FROM.....	Teaching focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• stronger with interpersonal use of L2 (rather than information)• depend on explicit explanations• need support/scaffolding• need extra time for L2 tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• increase interpersonal skills• explicit language skills• develop information use of L2 in and through the learning areas	
PHASE 2b learners can communicate socially in L2, and respond to some classroom activities. have difficulty using L2 for learning.		
Range FROM.....	Teaching focus	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• have well-developed everyday L2 skills• can engage with familiar texts/tasks with ESL support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• strategies to access mainstream learning area content• appropriate cognitive level & linguistically accessible materials• allowing extra time for students to complete L2 tasks• increase the use of information language• actively identifying the L2 demands of content and use appropriate ESL strategies with recognition for learner's cognitive level.	

DECODING THE PHASES

Refer to NTCF p 100-102

NB. ESL learners of average learning ability, social adjustment and uninterrupted schooling may move beyond the 2 nd phase after 4 or 5 years of schooling with ESL support.		
PHASE 3		
FROM.....TO	Teaching focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confident L2 users in social situations • at times have difficulty with academic contexts • understand literal levels in texts • have difficulty with implied meanings, author's viewpoint/bias, relationships and connections between information • 	Can communicate flexibly and competently in L2 socially and academically commensurate with their age. (see exit outcomes NTCF p 103)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex informational and aesthetic use of language related to specific areas of study • Developing research skills • Independent learning
NB. ESL learners of average academic ability, social adjustment and uninterrupted schooling may move beyond Phase 3 after 7 to 10 years of schooling with ESL support.		